

**Abstract****GATEWAY DEVICE FOR REMOTE FILE SERVER SERVICES**

A bulk data repository 201 for remote storage of bulk data from a plurality of computer networks 200-207 is accessed over a plurality of communications links, e.g., the internet 202. Each computer network is provided with a gateway appliance 200, which acts as a virtual filing system for a plurality of computer entities on a computer network. Gateway appliance emulates a file system, for example Windows NT<sup>®</sup> or Novell NetWare<sup>®</sup> by packaging data files to be stored in files for transmission over the communications linked to the data repository, each data file having appended a meta data header, which designates an address of the gateway appliance and a type of file system which the gateway appliance is emulating. The data repository, receives the data file with the meta data header, and stores the meta data header locally in a local database prior to filing the data file in a block of data reserved for the gateway appliance. The data repository can search data files by searching the meta data header to locate any of the data files of a gateway appliance. The data repository has automatic management tools for monitoring the amount of data storage space allocated to any gateway appliance, and for expanding the allocated data storage space if required.

Fig. 2